

# OUT

## Need to Know: Artist Libby Black's Faux-Mo World

Black delves into addiction, self-help, feminism, and lesbian culture.

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Last fall, after mounting a solo show at Joshua Liner Gallery in New York, Bay Area-based artist Libby Black realized that she was in treacherous waters. The lows that follow the highs of producing an exhibition are all too predictable and frighteningly real. To keep herself afloat, she plied her most trusted materials — paper, hot glue, and acrylic paint — and fashioned a Goyard life vest. And thus began the work for her current solo offering at Gallery 16 in San Francisco, “A Light That Never Goes Out.”

Black has made a career out of creating her own homespun versions of luxury goods — a life-size 1969 Mercedes 280 SL, a Gucci canoe, and an entire Louis Vuitton store. Those types of facsimiles figure prominently in “A Light That Never Goes Out,” which is anchored by a Chanel rowboat. But the show extends beyond the gloss and appeal of upmarket brands, as Black delves into addiction, self-help, feminism, and lesbian culture. Six small drawings and paintings extracted from her “Addicts and Overdoses” series provide a moment of intimacy in the otherwise chaotic and overviewed

lives of tragic fallen figures like Michael Jackson and Judy Garland. A trio of gouache paintings of lesbian pulp book covers from the '50s and '60s remind us of a time not so long ago when pornography, along with one's sexuality, was kept in the closet. It is hard to imagine Black as anything other than buoyant with a show like this, but should her spirits waver, she's certain to find a way to keep her head above water.



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